



European Remembrance Group

## INFORMAL RESOLUTION

### **on the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1941 Soviet mass deportations, the need to evaluate the Gulag and the crimes of the communist regimes in Europe**

*We, the signatories to this Resolution,*

- having regard to the universal principles of human rights and the fundamental principles of the European Union as a community based on common values,
  - having regard to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10 December 1948,
  - having regard to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms,
  - having regard to Resolution 1481 of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe of 26 January 2006 on the need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian Communist regimes,
  - having regard to Council Framework Decision 2008/913/JHA of 28 November 2008 on combating certain forms and expressions of racism and xenophobia by means of criminal law,
  - having regard to the European Parliament declaration on the proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Stalinism and Nazism adopted on 23 September 2008,
  - having regard to the European Parliament resolution of 19 September 2019 on the importance of European remembrance for the future of Europe,
  - having regard to the resolutions and declarations on the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes adopted by a number of national parliaments,
- A. whereas this year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union after the Belovezh Accords of 8 December 1991 and the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the first wave of mass Soviet deportations from the occupied Central and Eastern Europe on June 14, 1941;
- B. whereas the Soviet mass deportations, the entire Gulag system and the crimes of the communist regimes in Europe require condemnation and remembrance because they

highlight the importance of the central values of the EU and a steadfast stance made by the resolutions of the European Parliament that such crimes can never be allowed to be repeated;

- C. whereas the Gulag system and the Soviet mass deportations never received a moral or legal evaluation by the international community;
- D. whereas the Russian authorities have demanded the closure of the Memorials - Human Rights Centre Memorial and the International Memorial, which were established by the Nobel Peace Prize laureate Andrei Sakharov more than 30 years ago and have been conducting historical research about the mass deportations, the Gulag and other crimes committed by the Soviet regime and have been defending human rights and providing continuous support to the political prisoners in Russia;
- E. whereas Russian Federation refuses to disclose the burial places of the victims of mass Soviet repressions and continues to deny access to the Soviet-era archives;
- F. whereas historical revisionism, revival of the Stalin cult and glorification of the Soviet regime are promoted by the Russian authorities; whereas historical disinformation is actively spread by the Russian government in the EU and its neighbourhood as well as within Russia to polarize the societies and to justify Russia's aggression and territorial ambitions towards formerly Soviet-occupied territories; whereas Stalin personality cult has been growing in Georgia where at least nine new Stalin statues have been erected in the past decade;
- G. whereas the Gulag system was created and deportations were used against the people in Russia and occupied countries, against social and ethnic groups, as an organised systemic repression tool of ethnic cleansing and terror to annihilate the will to resist the regime, to kill political, economic and intellectual elites, achieve depopulation, Soviet colonisation and russification, to destroy the fabric of established cultural and socioeconomic ties and to expropriate land, property and assets;
- H. whereas following the occupation by the Soviet Union an organised system of forced labour camps similar to the Gulag was set up by the communist regimes in other countries in Eastern Europe like Bulgaria with the purpose of stifling resistance and dissent;
- I. whereas the Soviet deportations and violence were accompanied by a total annihilation of human rights, freedom of association and freedom of speech, full control of information sphere and glorification of the Soviet Union, Soviet communist propaganda and defamation campaigns against the "enemies of the people";
- J. whereas the Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court stipulates that persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other grounds as well as deportation or forcible transfer of population constitute crime against humanity;
- K. whereas the Soviet mass deportations since the beginning of the Second World War targeted territories of former Eastern Poland, modern Moldova and Romania, Western Ukraine and Western Belarus and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - the territories invaded by the Soviet Union under the Nazi-Soviet 23 August 1939 Treaty on Non-

Aggression and its secret protocols, when civilians and their family members labelled as “enemies of the people”, including infants, minors, women and elderly, have been deported to remote unpopulated areas of the USSR, while the deported men were often separated from their families and sent as prisoners to the Gulag, many of victims were arrested and executed, as in 1940 Katyn mass execution, when nearly 22 thousand Polish military officers and intellectuals were massacred;

- L. whereas the mass deportations in the Soviet-occupied territories continued during and after the Second World War for more than a decade;
- M. whereas Soviet mass deportations in the Baltic States were enforced during the first Soviet occupation and resumed immediately after the second Soviet occupation in 1944, culminating with mass deportations in 1948 05 22–23 (operation “Vesna”), 1949 03 25–28 (operation “Priboj”), 1951 10 02–03 (operation “Osen”) and continued in 1952;
- N. whereas 80 years ago on 14-18 June 1941 mass deportations have been carried out simultaneously in the then recently invaded Baltic states - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - by the Soviet communist totalitarian regime, which especially targeted teachers and their families from towns and villages, but also local community leaders, priests, elders, intellectuals; whereas as a result of 1941 June deportations, close to 60 thousand people from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in the week of the operation were arbitrarily arrested and forcibly transported to Russian Siberia and far north of the USSR; deported males, separated from their families and imprisoned at the Gulag prison camps in Krasnoyarsk, Komi, Sverdlovsk regions, have died during the first year of imprisonment due to hunger, while their families, mothers with their children have been sent to remote Novosibirsk, Altai regions and near the Laptev Sea in the Arctic, where majority of deported infants, minors and elderly have perished during the first winter of deportation due to cold, hunger, diseases and inhuman treatment;
- O. whereas atrocities of the first Soviet occupation in the Baltic states and mass deportations in June 1941 forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee the second Soviet occupation in 1944; continued Soviet atrocities pushed many others to join organised underground armed resistance which continued until 1953 and even later, with the last anti-Soviet partisan perishing in 1986, and solidified the peaceful resistance in the occupied countries which continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union;
- P. whereas over 100,000 Romanians from the annexed territories of Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina following the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact signed in August 1939, were deported by the totalitarian soviet authorities between 1941 and 1953 to Siberia, Central Asia, and the Far East;
- Q. whereas in 1941, according to official documents and other historical sources, around 30.000 Romanians from Moldova were sent to Siberian gulags by train;
- R. whereas a few months before their deportation started on June 13, 1941, the local Soviet People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) made up lists of people allegedly working with the Romanian authorities and plotting against the Soviet regime, mainly the country's elite: former landowners, manufacturers, merchants, leaders of political parties, and mayors of towns in Moldova;

- S. whereas the large majority of deportees never returned home, dying in the soviet gulags or surviving scattered across the USSR;
- T. whereas deportations of Romanian citizens of Roma and Jewish origins in Transnistria took place between 1942 and 1944;
- U. whereas the anti-Soviet resistance merits a separate analysis and evaluation, and needs to be reflected upon in a separate resolutions of the European Parliament and national parliaments of the EU Member States;
- V. whereas the Russian authorities to this day refuse to disclose the fate and burial places of slain anti-Soviet resistance members and supporters, such as 600 “disappeared” persons out of at least 2000 arrested and interrogated in 1945 Augustów roundup, the largest crime committed by the Soviets on Polish lands after the Second World War, or the location of the remains of Brigadier General Jonas Žemaitis-Vytautas, executed leader of the Lithuanian armed anti-Soviet resistance, posthumously titled the fourth President of Lithuania, and many more leaders, members and supporters of active anti-Soviet resistance who were killed in captivity of the Soviet authorities and their remains were never returned to the relatives;
- W. whereas the Gulag system of forced labour camps was created shortly after the 1917 Bolshevik coup d’état and operated until 1988, reaching enormous peak during the Stalin’s rule and operating approximately 30 000 individual camps;
- X. whereas first victims of the Gulag system became Russians - opposing members of the Communist party, dissidents, intellectuals, prosperous farmers who opposed collectivisation;
- Y. whereas estimated total number of Gulag prisoners is 15-18 million, of whom at least 1,5 million perished;
- Z. whereas the Soviet communist regime has sorted the people into two categories of loyalists and those threatening the USSR, “class enemy” or “socially unacceptable elements”, and people labelled as the latter – politicians, former heads of state and ministers, doctors, teachers, officials and servants of former state institutions, intellectuals, military and police officers, farmers, businessmen, members of political and civil society organisations, etc. and all their family members, as well as entire ethnic groups, such as Crimean Tatars and Chechens, - became target of repressions, arrest, imprisonment, torture, execution, deportation;
- AA. whereas estimated 6 million people became the victims of mass deportations in the USSR between 1920-1952; whereas the “Polish Operation” conducted by the NKVD between 1937–1938 ” during the Great Terror in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics took lives of up to 200,000 Poles; whereas at least 205,1 thousand were deported from the Baltic States in 1941, 1945-1952 (this number includes fully identified victims only); whereas according to estimations the total number of deportees in the period 1944–1952 reaches 124,000 for Estonia, 136,000 for Latvia and 245,000 for Lithuania.;
- BB. whereas majority of deportees never returned to their homeland, those deportees who after 1956 managed to return with official permission of the Soviet

authorities were not allowed to re-settle in their former homes or in many cases even in the region and country of their original residence, moreover, former deportees and their descendants faced obstacles to seek higher education or employment;

- CC. whereas the deportees were forcibly resettled in the north-eastern parts of the USSR with extremely harsh living conditions and inhospitable climate, particularly the Siberia, the Arctic region, and Kazakhstan;
- DD. whereas the Baltic States, Poland and other countries of the Central and Eastern Europe have suffered Soviet and German Nazi occupations and according to estimations, have lost even around one third of its population due to deportations, executions, imprisonment, suppression of resistance, forced emigration and the Holocaust;
- EE. whereas in 18-20 May 1944, a 200,000 of Crimean Tatars were deported to Central Asia by Joseph Stalin's Soviet regime; whereas almost half of those exiled, who endured long months of dire living conditions, are thought to have died of starvation and disease; whereas forcefully removing Crimean Tatar people from their historic territory bears all the hallmarks of genocide;
- FF. whereas until the very end of the existence of the USSR these crimes were vehemently denied by the Soviet authorities, and officially it was declared that only offenders, criminals, prostitutes and alike were deported;
- GG. whereas in 1956, three years after Stalin's death, his personal cult and his repressions were condemned by the consecutive USSR leader Nikita Khrushchev in his report, but it never became an official and long-term policy;
- HH. whereas on 26 April 1991 the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic passed the law On the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples with Article 2 stipulating that "Repressed are peoples (nations, nationalities or ethnic groups and other historically established cultural and ethnic communities of people, such as the Cossacks) against whom a policy of slander and genocide was pursued at the State level on the grounds of national or other affiliation, accompanied by their forced relocation, the abolition of national and State entities, the redrawing of national and territorial boundaries, the establishment of a regime of terror and violence in places of special settlement"; whereas with this law is not fully observed by the current leadership in Russia;
- II. whereas the European Court of Human Rights on 12 March 2019 issued a judgment in the case of Dr lingas v. Lithuania, confirming the sentence of an operative of the soviet repression structures issued by the national court for his participation in genocide, as an accessory to the crime;
- JJ. whereas in its recommendation to the Council on EU-Russia relations adopted on 26 February 2004 the European Parliament has recognized the Stalin ordered deportation of the Chechen people in 1944 as genocide;
- KK. whereas in its resolution adopted on 23 October 2008 the European Parliament recognized the Holodomor as crime against humanity caused by the deliberate policies of Stalin's USSR:

1. Express their heartfelt respect and sympathy for the victims and survivors of the Soviet Gulag and mass deportations and for their families and relatives, as well as for all victims of the communist regimes in Europe;
2. Recognize the June 1941 deportations and other mass deportations, ordered, planned and executed by the Soviet communist regime and the entire Gulag system as crime against humanity;
3. Maintain that the history of Soviet deportations and the Gulag victims is an inseparable part of the common European history;
4. Call to proclaim 27 May as European Day for the Victims of the Gulag System, a day when in 1953 the largest Gulag prisoners' uprising started in Norilsk "Gorlag" prison camp;
5. Condemn in strongest terms all forms of totalitarianism and its crimes, pay tribute and respect to the victims of Nazi tyranny, in particular all the victims of the Holocaust;
6. Express their respect to all those who, by fighting totalitarian regimes, demonstrated their heroism and true love for humankind, such as the Auschwitz hero Witold Pilecki who fought against Nazi and Soviet occupations of Poland and was sentenced to death by the communist authorities, which tried to erase the memory about him for more than 40 years;
7. Believe that democracies have a responsibility to ensure the historic remembrance about the 20<sup>th</sup> century totalitarian regimes in Europe and understanding of the reasons that brought about their rise and rule, and that their societies today are resistant to propaganda, manipulation of information and active measures of hostile authoritarian regimes against democracies, so that crimes of totalitarian past are not repeated again;
8. Call on EU and its Member States to encourage and support scientific research of the impact of mass deportations on societies, nations, states and ethnic groups to analyze and better understand socioeconomic, cultural and psychologic effects and consequences on societies today;
9. Call on the EU and its Member States to support cross-border research and remembrance projects between the Member States and formerly Soviet-occupied countries in its Eastern Neighborhood and Central Asia; welcome the efforts by the Republic of Kazakhstan to cooperate in researching and commemorating mass Soviet deportations;
10. Call on the European Commission to present concrete additional proposals to promote remembrance in the EU and beyond, as well as to strengthen support to European remembrance programs and projects such as the Citizens' Engagement and Participation Strand under the Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values Programme and the Platform of European Memory and Conscience to encourage scientific and academic research as well as assembly, collection, preservation and dissemination of information on mass deportations and repressions, translation of memoirs of survivors into the EU languages, youth programs, collaboration among universities, museums, research institutions and experts;

11. Call on the Member States to include the history and analysis of Nazi and communist totalitarianism into their school curricula, strongly recommend inclusion of the history of the Soviet mass deportations and the Gulag; underline that the comprehensive education, research and remembrance of the totalitarian past has important implications for the emergence of civil awareness and plays an important role in the value orientation of younger European generations that can prevent them from repeating the tragic mistakes of the past;
12. Remind the importance of commemorating the historic European Days across the EU Member States – 25 May as the Day of Heroes of the Fight against Totalitarianism and 23 August as the Day of Remembrance for Victims of totalitarian regimes;
13. Support remembrance initiatives such as the memorial for the victims of the totalitarian regimes in Brussels, proposed by the Platform of European Memory and Conscience;
14. Propose to consider establishing a European museum of the victims of Communism, and to reflect the history of mass deportations and the Gulag more prominently in the permanent exposition at the House of European History, to support translation of memoirs of the victims into foreign languages, creation and Europe-wide dissemination of the documentaries and non-fiction films on the topic, with focus on young generation;
15. Call on local authorities across the EU to look into and consider changing the names of public spaces, streets, cities and localities squares etc. if their titles are associated with the leaders of the Soviet communism totalitarian regime and the communist regimes that the Soviet Union created and supported in the Eastern Europe, thus paying tribute and respect to the victims of the regime and fostering the European resilience against modern threats to democracy;
16. Remind that the crimes of the Soviet communist regime committed in many decades of the Soviet occupation and rule have not been evaluated from the international law perspective, no reparations or compensations for the damage inflicted to the victims and countries were ever paid, however, there is sufficient evidence and calculations to prove the substantial economic, demographic, environmental and social losses that the Soviet occupation caused;
17. Regret that Russia, with active support of current Russian authorities and regime-sponsored propagandists, returned to utilizing and promoting the Soviet history narratives, engages in historical revisionism and uses historic disinformation as part of its hybrid attacks against nations which suffered under both Nazi and Soviet totalitarian regimes, aimed at discrediting anti-communist resistance, questioning the independence of neighboring states, dividing common European remembrance and sowing discord;
18. Regret that also in Belarus the current authoritarian regime of A. Lukashenka is following a similar policy and narratives with regard to the tragic fate of the Belarusian people in the turmoil of the Second World War, while they were among the first to experience the Soviet mass deportations; stress that developments in Belarus - when freedom-loving peaceful protesters are detained, tortured, convicted to many years in prison under fabricated allegations, or forced to flee their homeland - are a

continuation of the Soviet regime and demonstrate that the European continent is not yet free of totalitarianism;

19. Deplore the revival of Stalin's personal cult in Russia, whitewashing of Soviet crimes of occupation, state-sponsored denial and distortion of historical facts, as well as the ongoing occupation of territories in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine by Russia; regret growing Stalin's cult in Georgia;
20. Note that Russian archives on deportations are not accessible for relatives of the victims and to researchers, thus hampering collection of data and analysis, and hope that future Russian leadership will take the decision to open them; call on Russia to guarantee free and unhindered access to the so-called "Trophy archives" which were transferred to Moscow in 1944 and 1945 from territories occupied by the Soviet Union;
21. Regret the unfounded decision of the Russian authorities not to issue visas to the "Mission Siberia", the mission of Lithuanian youth to visit and tend the graves of deportees, which otherwise are not taken care of by the Russian authorities; welcome the cooperation and support demonstrated by the Kazakh authorities, who welcomed "Mission Siberia" in Kazakhstan in 2018 and 2019;
22. Note that majority of areas of former Gulag prisons and internment camps in present-day Russia are forgotten and destroyed instead of being turned into places of memory for the victims of repressions; propose to create an easily accessible and available in all EU languages collection of historical information, data and register of all Gulag prisons, internment camps and areas of deportations where citizens of EU Member States have perished;
23. Regret that Russia, which to this day remains the greatest victim of the Soviet communist totalitarianism, is not yet able to come to terms with its gruesome past and instead its authorities are persecuting those who are working to shed light on the Soviet totalitarian crimes, including the imprisonment of historian Yuri Dmitriev and the crackdown on the Human Rights Centre Memorial and the International Memorial;
24. Invite the leadership of Russia to join common initiatives to commemorate and preserve the memory of victims of Soviet regime and the Gulag system;

Co-signing Members of the European Parliament:

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